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ABSTRACT

Trend data show that while the numbers and proportions of undereducated youth are falling, undereducation in the eighties, especially among minority youth, is considerable and persistent. This study uses a population-based definition of undereducation for which trend data are available for Whites and Blacks, beginning in 1967, and for Hispanics in 1973. Undereducated youth are youth, ages 16 to 24, who were not enrolled in school between February 1 and April 1, 1980, and had not completed 12 years of schooling. The study is part of an on-going analysis of the information on young people in the 1980 Census in the context of trend data through 1985. Each of the following analyses of undereducated youth is succinctly reported, using tables, graphs, and brief text, and entitled: (1) Gender; (2) Racal/Ethnic Groups; (3) Place of Birth; (4) Language Background; (5) Poverty Level; (6) Poverty and Race/Ethnicity; (7) Place of Birth and Language; (8) Comparing Years of Schooling; (9) Levels of Schooling and Race/Ethnicity; (10) Status in the Labor Force; (11) Comparing the States; (12) Numbers by State; (13) Rates by State; (14) Asian and Pacific Island Youth; (15) Undereducation Rates in the States; (16) Black Youth: Undereducation Rates in the States; (17) Hispanic Youth: Undereducation Rates in the States; (18) Native American Youth: Undereducation Rates in the States; (19) White Youth: Undereducation Rates in the States; and (20) White Language Minority Youth: Undereducation Rates in the States. Terms used in the analyses and two key tables of statistical data on out-of-school youth are appended. (FMW)

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The Undereducation of American Youth

Intercultural Development Research Association
CENTER FOR THE PREVENTION & RECOVERY OF DROPOUTS

José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.
Executive Director

María del Refugio Robledo, Ph.D.
Project Director

Dorothy Waggoner, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The Undereducation of American Youth
Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)

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FOREWORD

The data presented in this booklet form part of an on-going special analysis of the information on young people, ages 16 to 24, in the 1980 Census in the context of trend data through 1985. Use of the Census makes possible comparison of White majority youth with minority youth, including White non-Hispanic youth from language minority backgrounds. It makes possible examination of potential risk factors, such as native versus foreign place of birth, language background, gender and poverty status. It makes possible analyses of the undereducation rates of majority and minority youth in the various states. Examination of risk and other factors which may be related to the differences between the state rates of members of the same minority groups may provide possible explanations which will suggest more effective interventions to keep youth in school.

The study uses a population-based definition of undereducation for which trend data are available for Whites and Blacks, beginning in 1967, and for Hispanics in 1973. These trend data (from the Current Populations Surveys of school enrollment undertaken yearly in October) show that while the numbers and proportions of undereducated youth are falling, undereducation in the eighties, especially among minority youth, is considerable and persistent.

Terms used in these analyses are defined in the Attachment. Key tables are also appended.

THE UNDEREDUCATION OF AMERICAN YOUTH

Nearly six million young people, ages 16 to 24 years old, were not enrolled in school and had not completed the twelfth grade . . .

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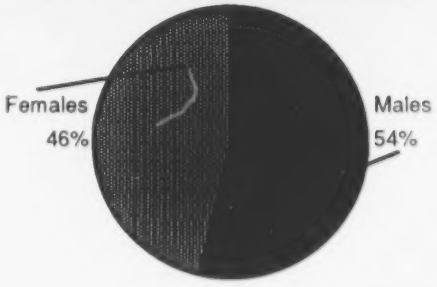
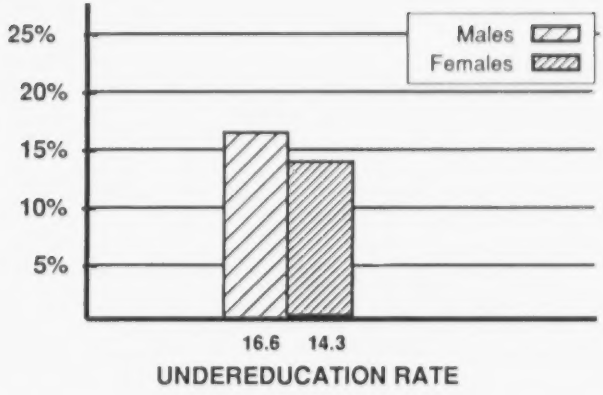
UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: GENDER

More males than females are undereducated. . .

Males	*3,163,000*
Females	*2,720,000*
	5,883,000



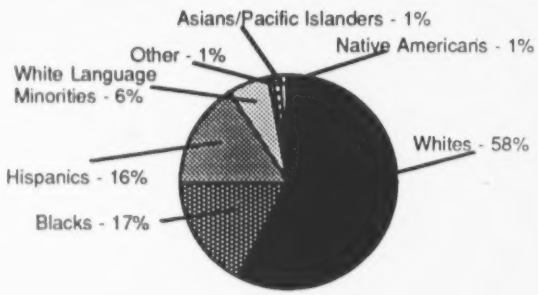


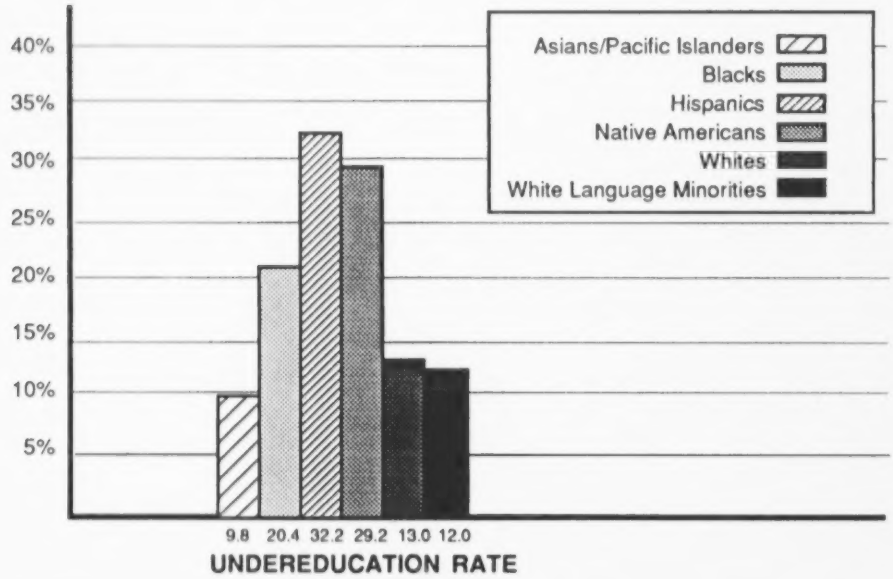
Males are 1.2 times more likely than females not to be enrolled in school and not to have completed high school.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS

The majority of undereducated youth are White . . .

Asian/Pacific Islanders	*55,000*
Blacks	*1,023,000*
Hispanics	*923,000*
Native Americans	*82,000*
Whites	*3,426,000*
White Language Minorities	*337,000*
Other	*38,000*
	5,883,000



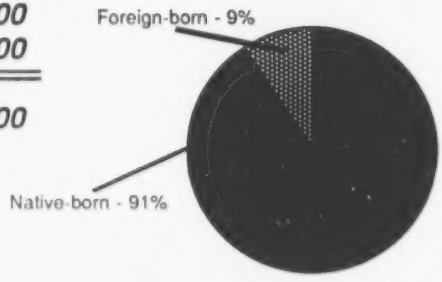


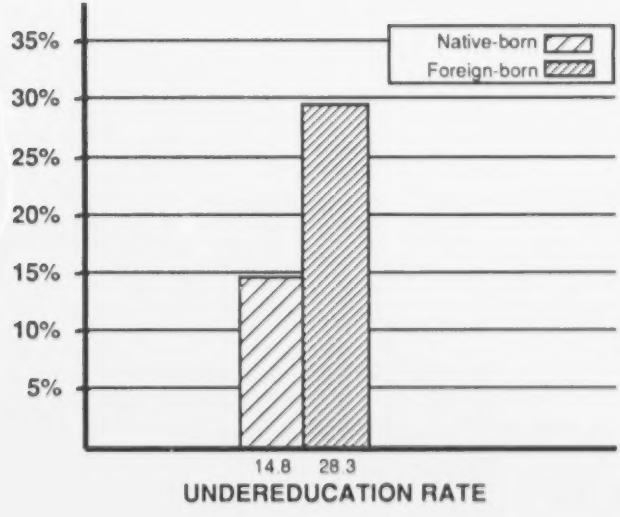
But Hispanics, Native Americans and Blacks are more likely to be undereducated.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: PLACE OF BIRTH

Nine out of ten undereducated youth are born in this country . . .

Native-born	*5,340,000*
Foreign-born	*543,000*
	5,883,000



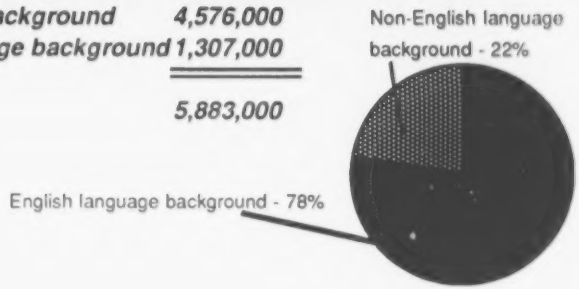


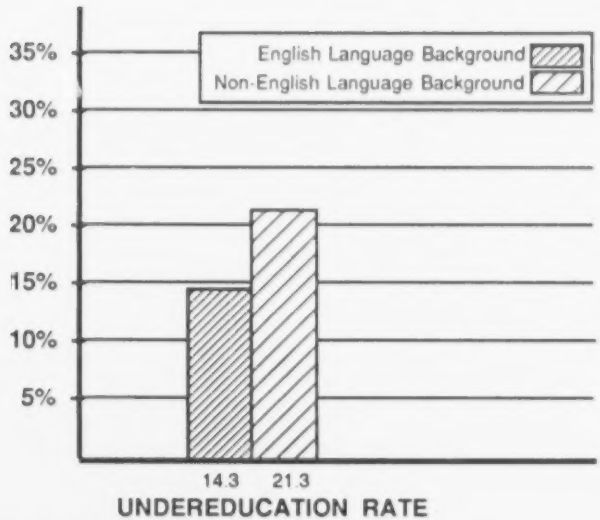
However, foreign-born youth are more likely than native-born youngsters to be out-of-school non-high school graduates.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

More than three-fourths of youth who have not completed high school and are not enrolled in school have English language backgrounds . . .

English language background	*4,576,000*
Non-English language background	*1,307,000*
	5,883,000



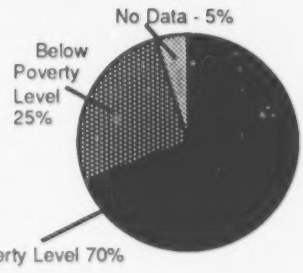


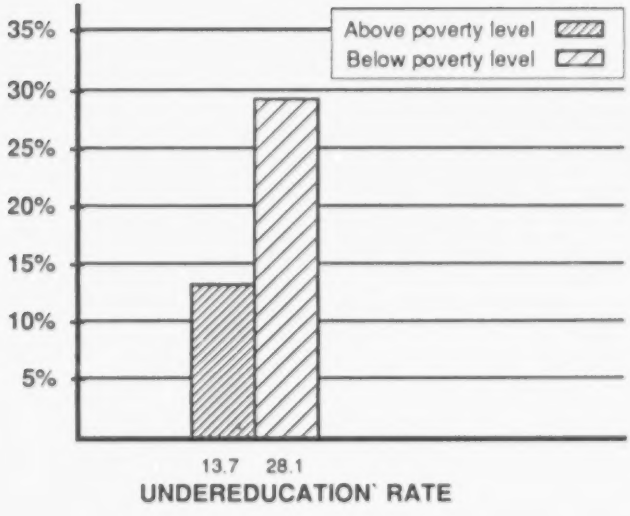
Yet young people from non-English language backgrounds are 1.5 times more likely than their English language counterparts to have discontinued school before completing twelve years.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: POVERTY LEVEL

The majority of undereducated young people come from families with incomes above the poverty level . . .

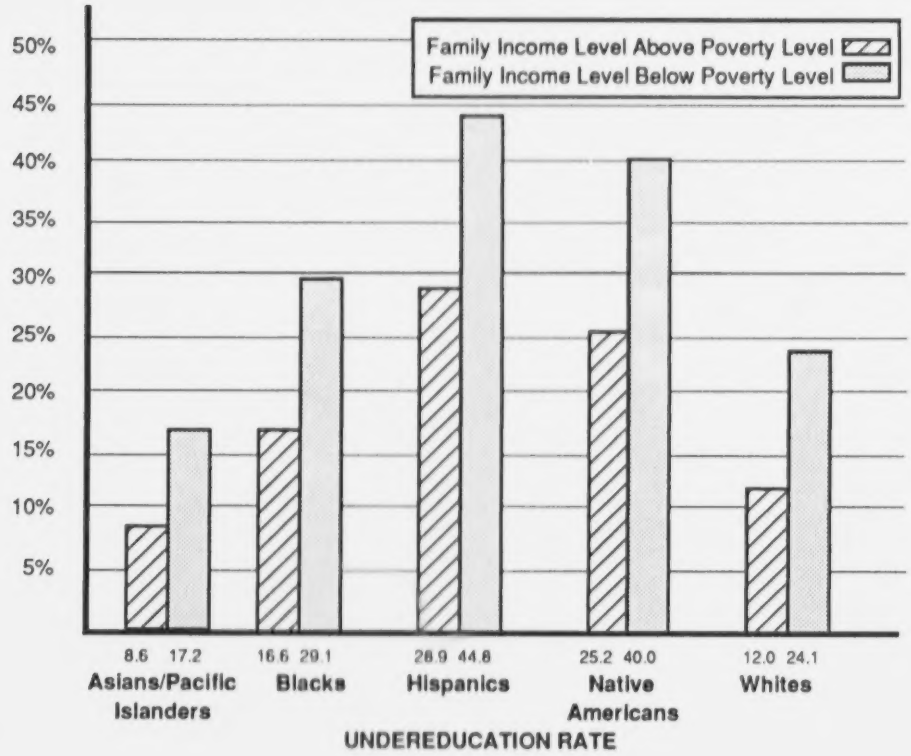
Above poverty level	*4,097,000*
Below poverty level	*1,498,000*
(Group quarters: no data)	*288,000*
	5,883,000





However, young people with incomes below the poverty level are twice as likely to be undereducated as those from more advantaged backgrounds.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: POVERTY & RACE/ETHNICITY

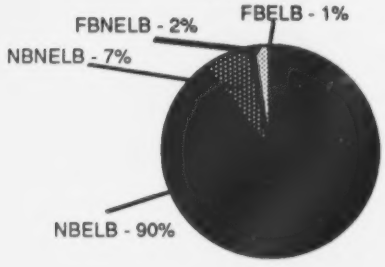


Poor Asian/Pacific and White youth are twice as likely to be undereducated as Asian/Pacific and White youth from more advantaged families.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: PLACE OF BIRTH & LANGUAGE

The majority of White, Black and Native American undereducated youth are native-born and have English language backgrounds. Among undereducated youth, Hispanics are the most likely to have non-English language background and Asians and Pacific Islanders, the most likely to be foreign-born.

WHITES



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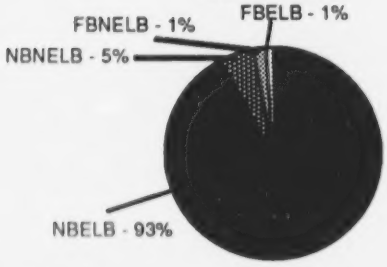
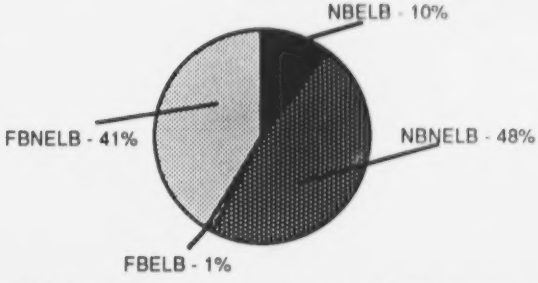
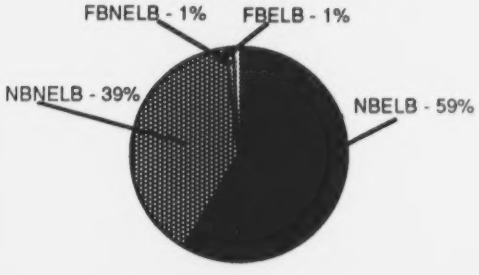


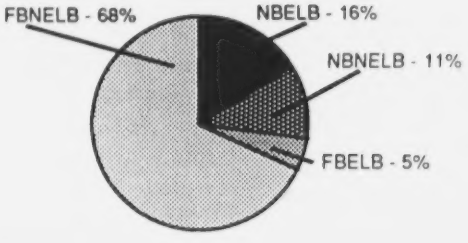
HISPANICS



NATIVE AMERICANS



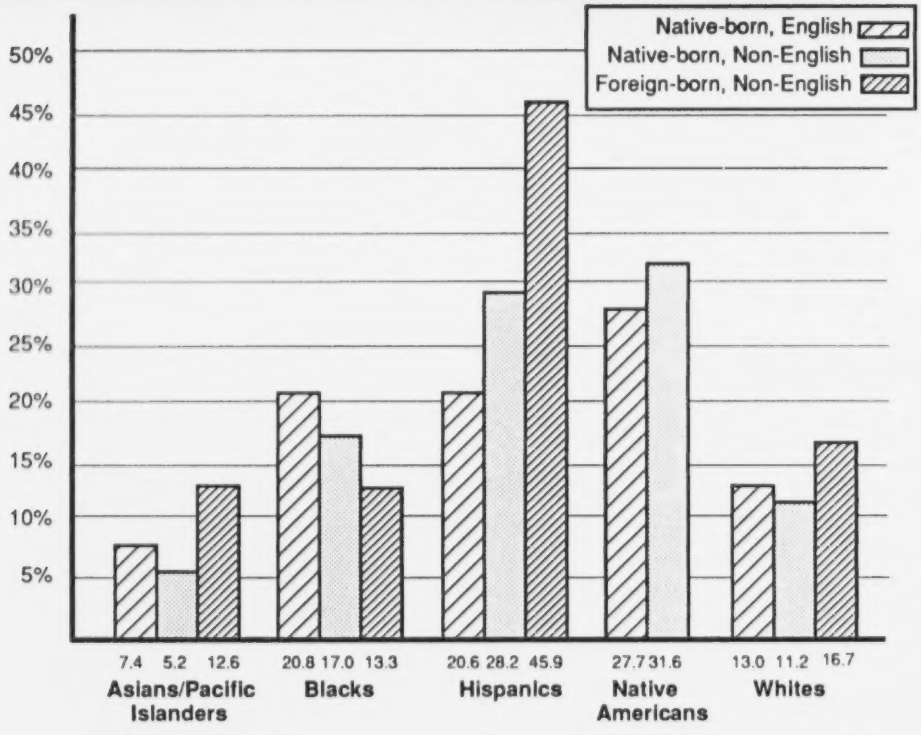
ASIANS/PACIFIC ISLANDERS



NBELB - Native-born, English Language Background
FBELB - Foreign-born, English Language Background
NBNELB - Native-born, Non-English Language Background
FBNELB - Foreign-born, Non-English Language Background

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: PLACE OF BIRTH & LANGUAGE

Among native- born Blacks, Whites, Asians and Pacific Islanders, those from non-English language backgrounds are less likely to be undereducated than those from English-speaking backgrounds . . .

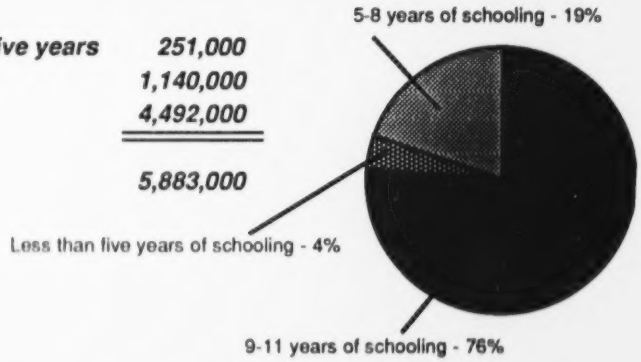


In contrast, among Hispanics and Native Americans born in this country, a non-English language background increases the likelihood of undereducation.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: COMPARING YEARS OF SCHOOLING

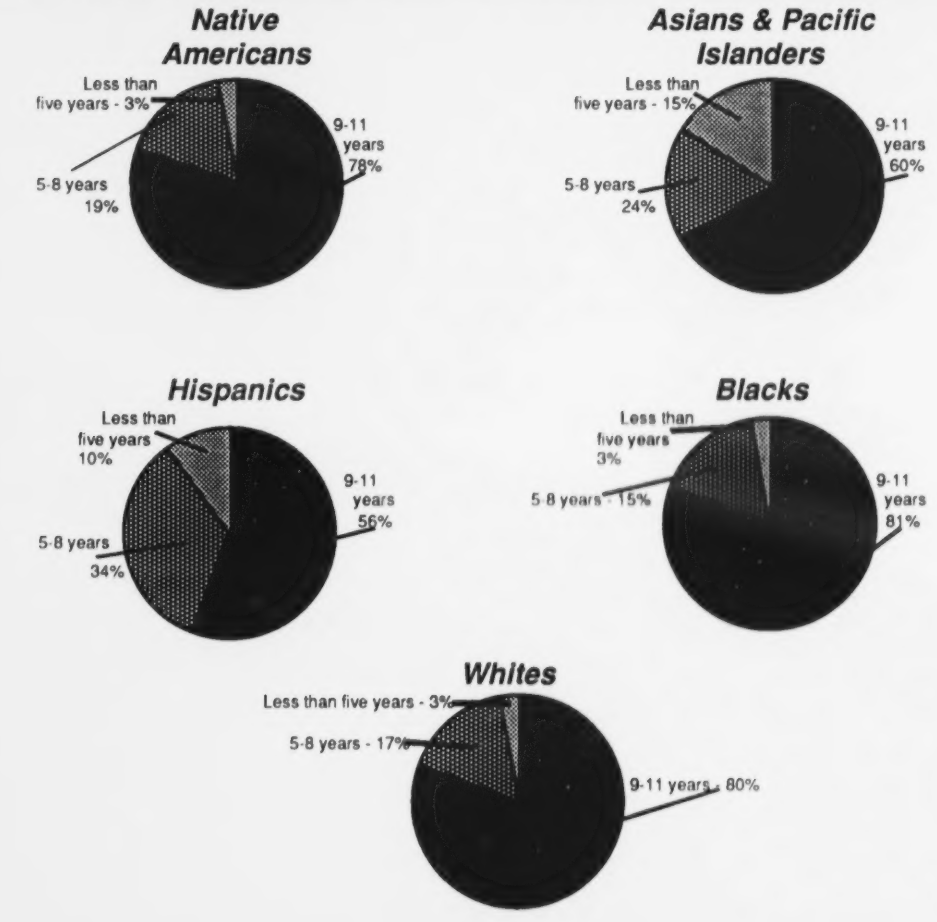
Three out of four undereducated youth reach high school before they discontinue their schooling . . .

Fewer than five years	*251,000*
5-8 years	*1,140,000*
9-11years	*4,492,000*
	5,883,000



However, 1.39 million never reach the ninth grade.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: LEVELS OF SCHOOLING & RACE/ETHNICITY



Fewer than three in five undereducated Hispanic youth complete at least nine years of schooling compared to four out of five Whites, Blacks and Native Americans. Asians who are undereducated are the most likely to have very low levels of education with 15 percent completing fewer than five years of schooling.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: STATUS IN THE LABOR FORCE

Among undereducated young men . . .

	Armed Forces	Civilian Employed	Civilian Unemployed	Not in Labor Force
Asians/Pacific Islanders	5%	53%	10%	32%
Blacks	5%	39%	18%	39%
Hispanics	3%	64%	13%	20%
Native Americans	5%	43%	20%	33%
Whites	5%	61%	16%	18%

Among undereducated young women . . .

	Armed Forces	Civilian Employed	Civilian Unemployed	Not in Labor Force
Asians/Pacific Islanders	*	40%	6%	54%
Blacks	*	26%	15%	59%
Hispanics	*	34%	8%	58%
Native Americans	*	26%	10%	64%
Whites	*	37%	10%	53%

(* denotes less than 1%)

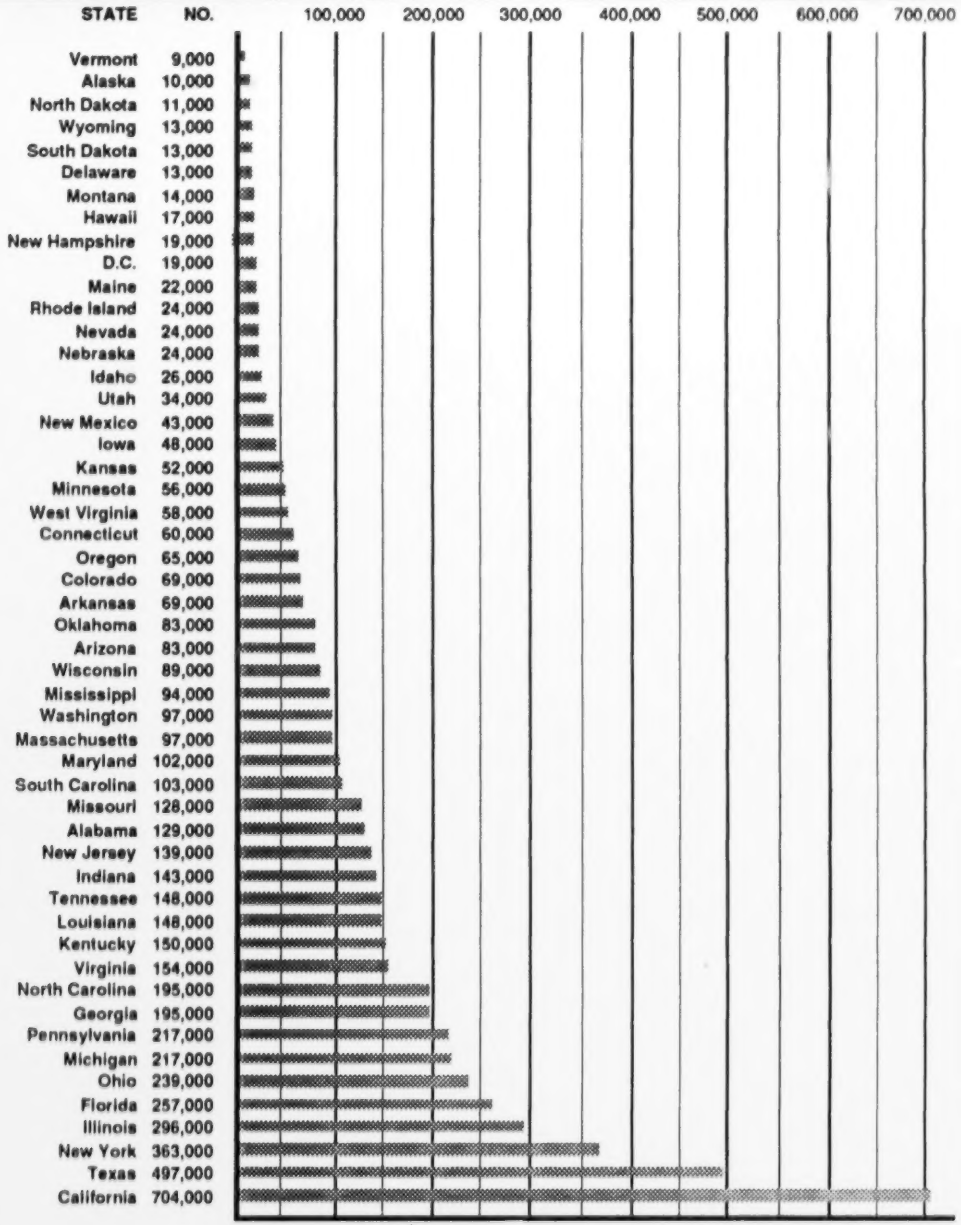
Among undereducated young males, unemployment is most prevalent among Native Americans and Blacks. Undereducated young Black males are the most likely not to be in the labor force. Young women are less likely to be in the labor force than young men.

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: COMPARING THE STATES

State	Total Number (In Thousands)	Percent	Rate
Total	**5,883**	**100.00%**	**15.4**
Alabama	129	2.19%	19.3
Alaska	10	0.17%	13.2
Arizona	83	1.41%	17.8
Arkansas	69	1.17%	19.2
California	704	11.97%	17.4
Colorado	69	1.17%	13.3
Connecticut	60	1.02%	12.0
Delaware	13	0.22%	12.7
D.C.	19	0.32%	16.0
Florida	257	4.37%	17.7
Georgia	195	3.31%	20.9
Hawaii	17	0.29%	10.0
Idaho	26	0.44%	16.1
Illinois	296	5.03%	15.5
Indiana	143	2.43%	15.2
Iowa	48	0.82%	9.7
Kansas	52	0.88%	12.7
Kentucky	150	2.55%	24.0
Louisiana	148	2.51%	19.5
Maine	22	0.37%	12.0
Maryland	102	1.73%	14.4
Massachusetts	97	1.65%	9.9
Michigan	217	3.69%	13.5
Minnesota	56	0.95%	8.0
Mississippi	94	1.60%	21.2
Missouri	128	2.18%	15.7
Montana	14	0.24%	10.7
Nebraska	24	0.41%	8.8
Nevada	24	0.41%	18.4
New Hampshire	19	0.32%	13.0
New Jersey	139	2.36%	12.3
New Mexico	43	0.73%	18.3
New York	363	6.17%	13.1
North Carolina	195	3.31%	18.9
North Dakota	11	0.19%	8.7
Ohio	239	4.06%	13.3
Oklahoma	83	1.41%	16.4
Oregon	65	1.10%	15.6
Pennsylvania	217	3.69%	11.3
Rhode Island	24	0.41%	15.1
South Carolina	103	1.75%	18.0
South Dakota	13	0.22%	11.1
Tennessee	148	2.52%	19.4
Texas	497	8.45%	19.9
Utah	34	0.58%	13.0
Vermont	9	0.15%	10.1
Virginia	154	2.62%	16.7
Washington	97	1.65%	13.8
West Virginia	58	0.98%	19.0
Wisconsin	89	1.51%	10.8
Wyoming	13	0.22%	15.4

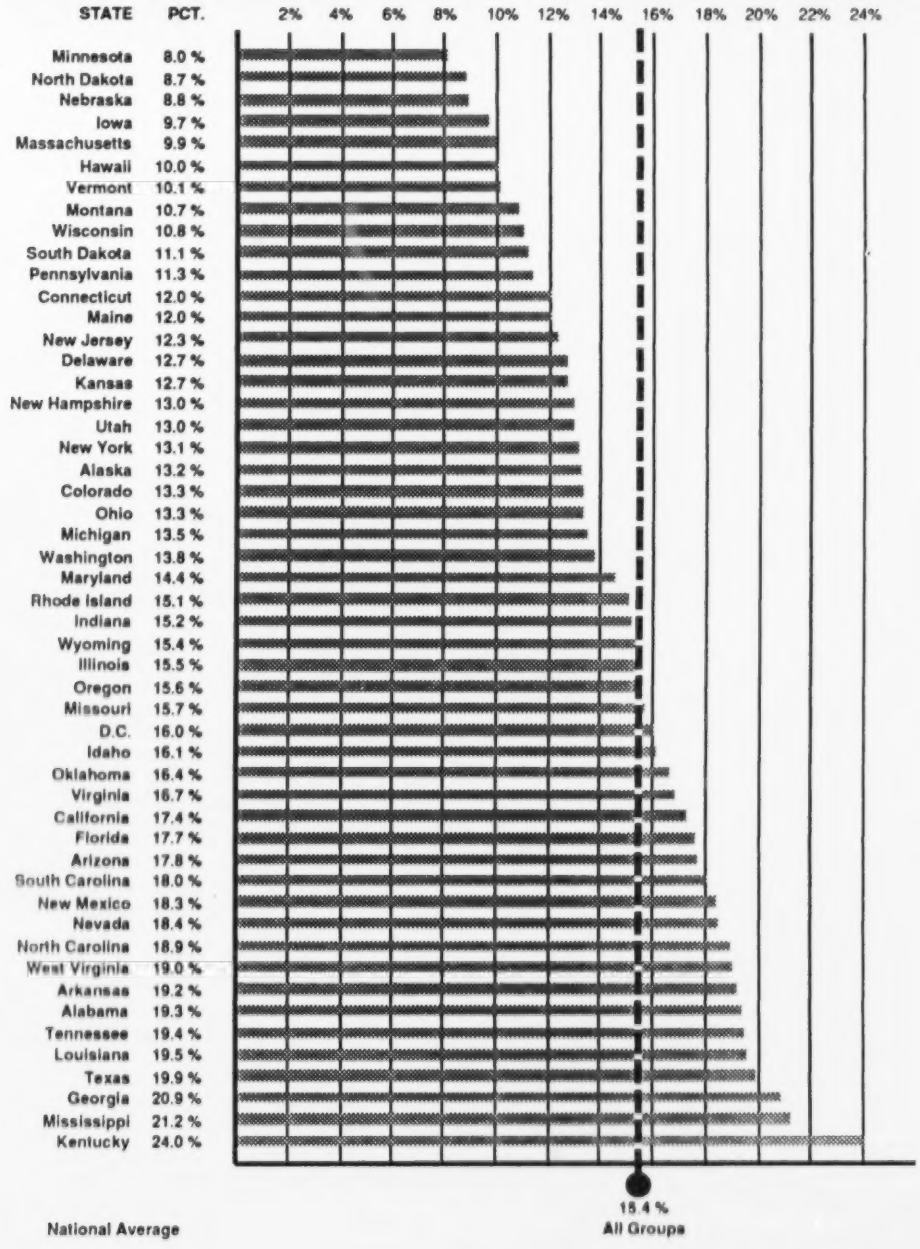
UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: NUMBERS BY STATE

The largest numbers of undereducated youth are in California, Texas and New York, the states which also have the largest populations. However, there were at least 100,000 undereducated young people in seventeen other states. No state had fewer than 10,000 such youth except Vermont.



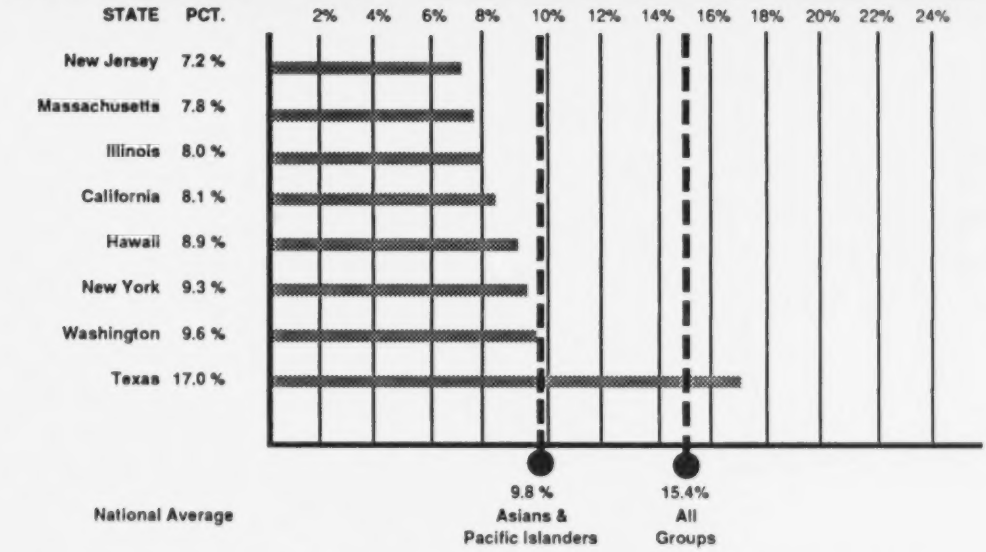
UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH: RATES BY STATE

Undereducation rates among the states range from eight percent in Minnesota to 24 percent in Kentucky . . .



ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLAND YOUTH: UNDEREDUCATION RATES IN THE STATES

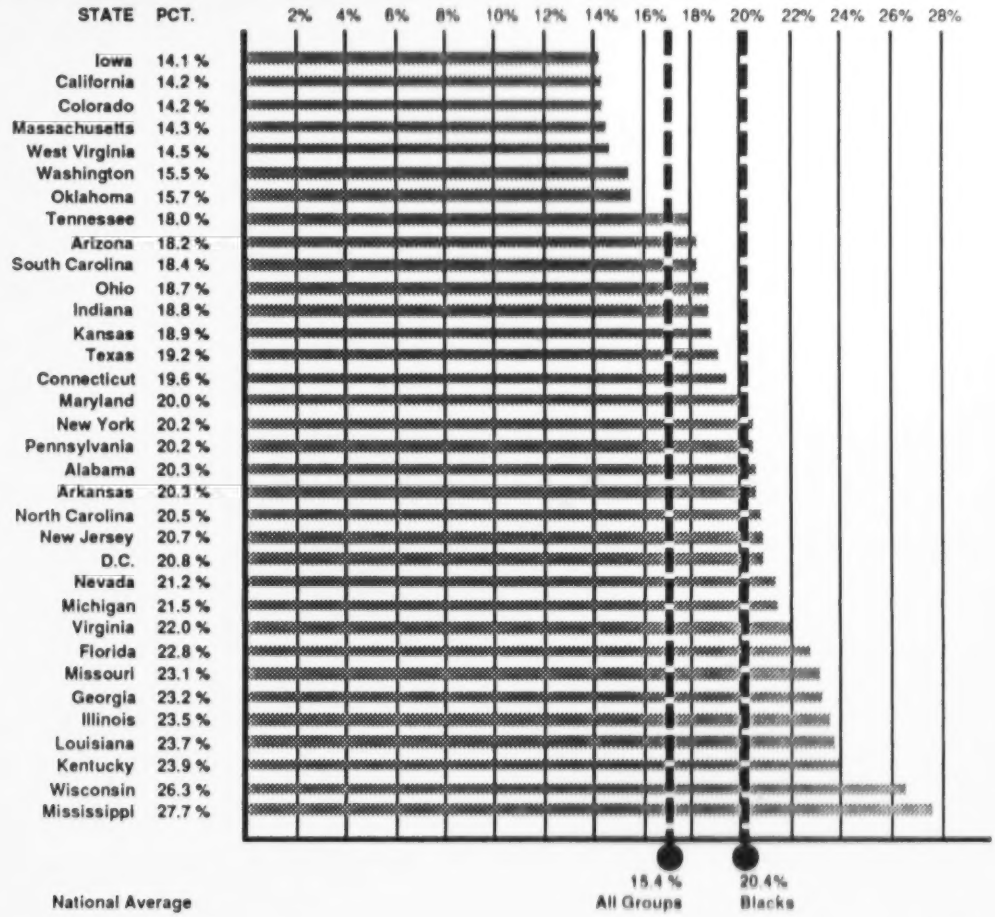
Undereducation rates among Asians and Pacific Islanders are lower than the average for all groups in all states except Texas.



NB: States with fewer than an estimated 10,000 undereducated youth in the racial/ethnic group are not included.

BLACK YOUTH: UNDEREDUCATION RATES IN THE STATES

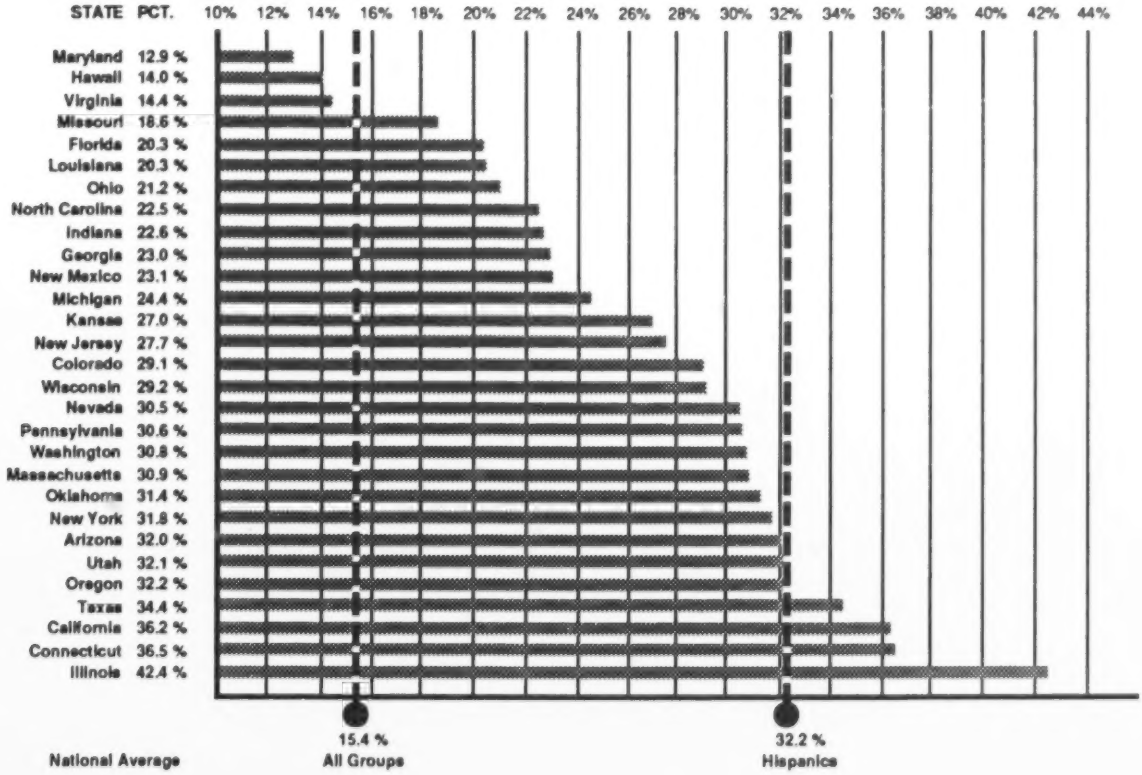
The undereducation rate among Black youth is five percentage points higher than the average for all groups; Mississippi and Wisconsin have the highest rates.



NB: States with fewer than an estimated 10,000 undereducated youth in the racial ethnic group are not included.

HISPANIC YOUTH: UNDEREDUCATION RATES IN THE STATES

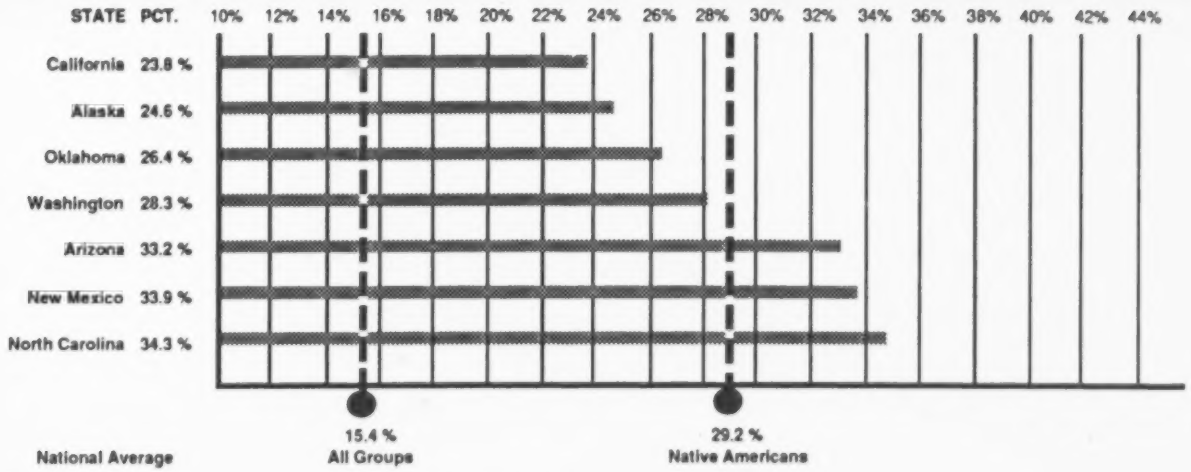
Hispanic young people are more than twice as likely to be undereducated than all groups combined. In 26 states, Hispanics have a higher undereducation rate than the 15.4% average rate for all groups.



NB: States with fewer than an estimated 10,000 undereducated youth in the racial/ethnic group are not included.

NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH: UNDEREDUCATION RATES IN THE STATES

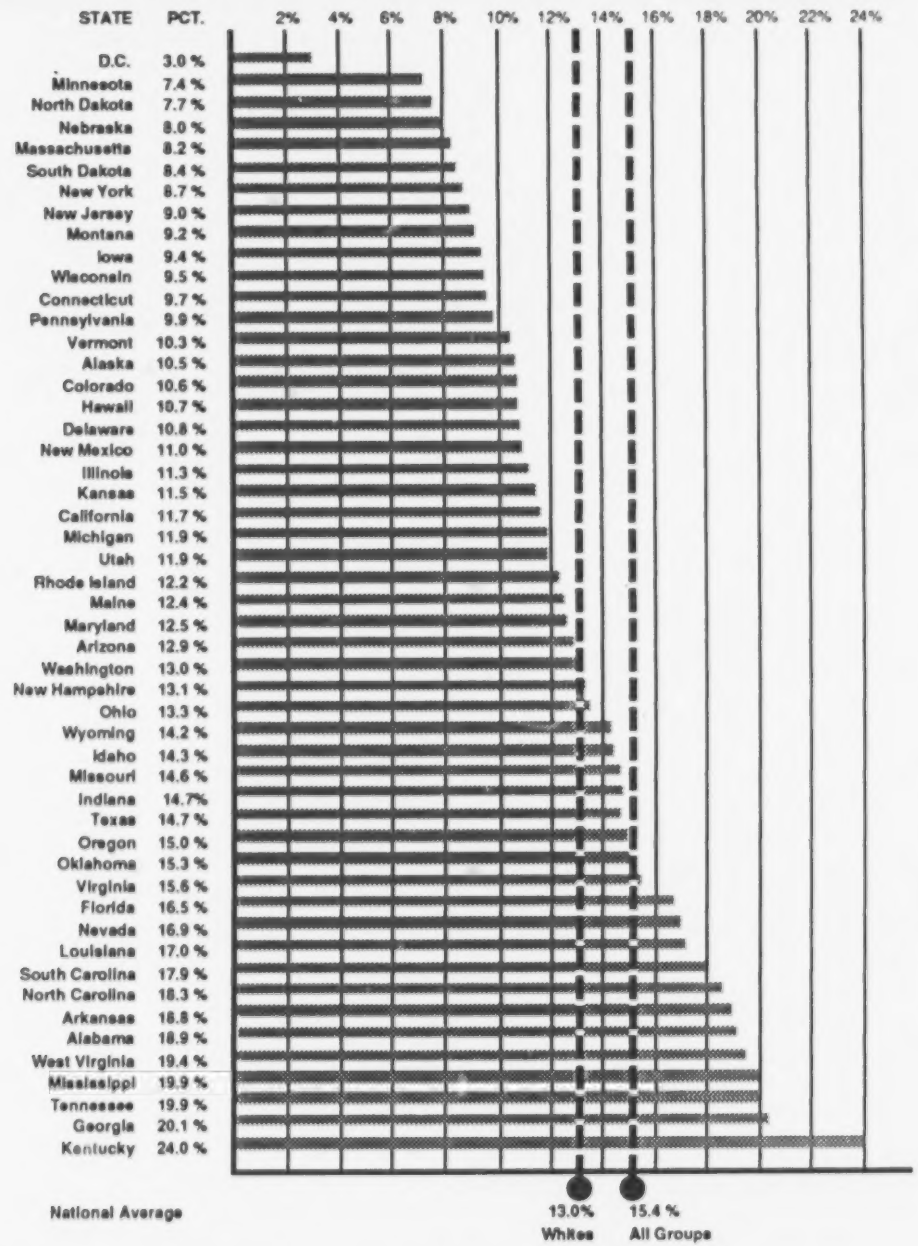
The undereducation rate of Native Americans is almost twice that of all groups combined. Native Americans are most likely to be undereducated in Arizona, New Mexico and North Carolina.



NB: States with fewer than an estimated 10,000 undereducated youth in the racial/ethnic group are not included.

WHITE YOUTH: UNDEREDUCATION RATES IN THE UNITED STATES

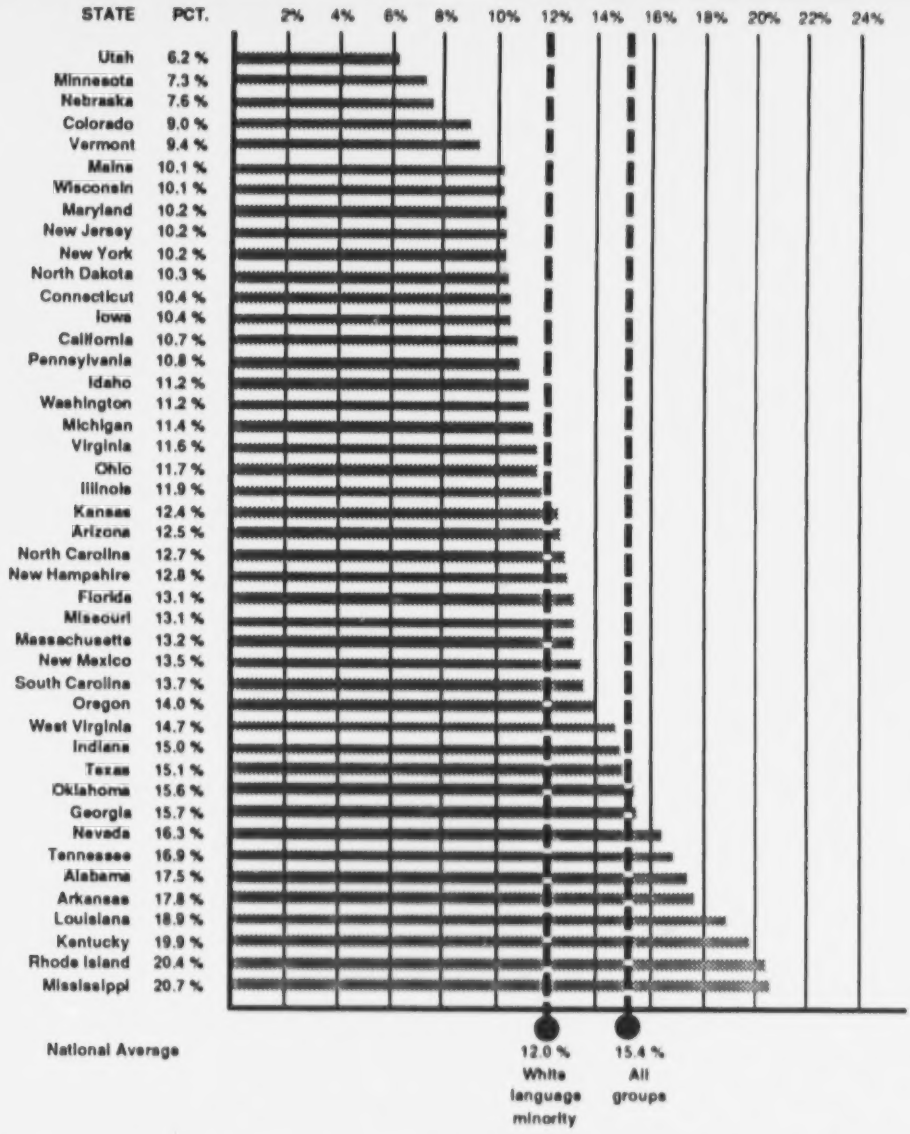
States with higher than average undereducation rates among White Youth are primarily in the South . . .



NB: States with fewer than an estimated 10,000 undereducated youth in the racial/ethnic group are not included.

WHITE LANGUAGE MINORITY YOUTH: UNDEREDUCATION RATES IN THE STATES

White youth with non-English language backgrounds have an undereducation rate of 12.0%, 3.4 percentage points under the average for all groups; Rates are higher than the average for all groups in 10 states with Mississippi and Rhode Island having the highest.



NB: States with fewer than an estimated 10,000 undereducated youth in the racial/ethnic group are not included.

ATTACHMENT

DEFINITIONS

Undereducated youth. Undereducated youth are youth, ages 16 to 24, who were not enrolled in school between February 1 and April 1, 1980, and had not completed twelve years of schooling. The Census form specified that individuals who had passed a high school equivalency test, such as the General Educational Development (GED) test, should indicate that they had completed twelve years of schooling. Thus, in this study, undereducated youth are not only out-of-school youth who have not graduated or received a diploma from a regular high school; they are also youth who have not completed twelve years of schooling by the most familiar alternate method. While undereducation is related to dropping out of school, the undereducation data reported here include 16 to 19 year olds who may have dropped out of school after the survey date.

Undereducation rate. The undereducation rate is the proportion of a given group of youth who are not enrolled in school and have not completed the twelfth grade. The rate is expressed as a percentage.

Years of schooling completed. Years of schooling completed are the number of years completed by undereducated youth before discontinuing their education. Undereducated youth are grouped into those who had completed zero to four years, five to eight years, or nine to eleven years of schooling.

Race and ethnicity. Hispanic youth are those identified as such in the 1980 Census. Non-Hispanic youth are classified as White, Black, American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut, and Asian and Pacific Islander according to their responses to the race question. Asian and Pacific Islander youth are Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Hawaiian, Guamanian and Samoan youth and other youth from Asian and Pacific Island groups specified by respondents. In this booklet American Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts are included under the Native American category. White language minority youth are non-Hispanic, White youngsters from non-English language backgrounds.

Nativity. Native-born youth are those born in one of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico or an outlying U.S. area and youth born abroad of American parents. Foreign-born youth are all others.

Language background. English language background young people are those from households in which only English is spoken. Non-English language background or language minority youth are those who speak languages other than English at home themselves or who are from households in which one or more individuals speak a language other than English. The responses were analyzed by household to identify monolingual English-speaking households and language minority households.

Poverty. Youth from families with incomes below the poverty level are those living in families whose 1979 income fell below the poverty threshold for families of their size and age distribution, as established by the Federal Government, and youth living with unrelated individuals, except those in group quarters, whose own incomes were below the appropriate poverty threshold. Youth from families with incomes above the poverty level are all others from whom poverty status was determined in 1980. The average poverty threshold for a family of four was $7,412. Poverty status was not determined for youth living in military barracks, institutions or other group quarters.

Labor Force Status. Employed youth are those who were working or absent from a civilian job in which they were employed during the last week in March 1980. Unemployed youth are those who were looking for work and available to work during March 1980. Youth in the civilian labor force consist of these two groups. Youth who are not in the labor force are those who were neither employed nor looking for civilian employment in March 1980 and who were not members of the fourth labor force group—the Armed Forces. These are the so-called discouraged workers. They are youth who cease looking for work when they fail to find it or, believing that they will be unsuccessful, never enter the labor market.

Table 1-- ESTIMATED NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE, AGES 16 TO 24, WHO ARE NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL AND HAVE NOT COMPLETED TWELFTH GRADE, BY AGE GROUP AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS: UNITED STATES, 1980

Characteristic	Total		16 to 19 years		20 to 24 years	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	**5,883,000**	**100.0**	**2,327,000**	**100.0**	**3,556,000**	**100.0**
Sex						
Males	3,163,000	53.8	1,262,000	54.2	1,901,000	53.5
Females	2,720,000	46.2	1,065,000	45.8	1,655,000	46.5
Racial/ethnic group						
Asians and Pacific Islanders	55,000	0.9	18,000	0.8	37,000	1.0
Blacks	1,023,000	17.4	379,000	16.3	644,000	18.1
Hispanics	923,000	15.7	332,000	14.3	590,000	16.6
Native Americans	82,000	1.4	36,000	1.6	46,000	1.3
Whites	3,426,000	58.2	1,404,000	60.3	2,022,000	56.9
White language minorities	337,000	5.7	144,000	6.2	193,000	5.4
Others	38,000	0.6	14,000	0.6	24,000	0.7
Nativity & language background						
Native born, English only	4,523,000	76.9	1,816,000	78.0	2,707,000	76.1
Native born, non English[1]	817,000	13.9	345,000	14.8	472,000	13.3
Foreign born, English only	53,000	0.9	19,000	0.8	34,000	1.0
Foreign born, non English[1]	490,000	8.3	147,000	6.3	343,000	9.6
Poverty status in 1979[2]						
Above poverty level	4,097,000	69.6	1,559,000	67.0	2,538,000	71.4
Below poverty level	1,498,000	25.5	638,000	27.4	860,000	24.2
Years of schooling completed						
Fewer than 5	251,000	4.3	70,000	3.0	181,000	5.1
5 to 8	1,140,000	19.4	475,000	20.4	665,000	18.7
9 to 11	4,492,000	76.4	1,782,000	76.6	2,710,000	76.2

[1]People living in households in which one or more people speak a language other than English at home.

[2]Not available for people living in group quarters.

NOTE: Detail may not add to total number because of rounding.

Table 2.-- ESTIMATED NUMBERS AND UNDEREDUCATION RATES OF YOUNG PEOPLE, AGES 16 TO 24, WHO ARE NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL AND HAVE NOT COMPLETED TWELFTH GRADE, BY AGE GROUP AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS: UNITED STATES, 1980

Characteristic	Total		16 to 19 years		20 to 24 years	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Total	**5,883,000**	**15.4**	**2,327,000**	**13.7**	**3,556,000**	**16.9**
Sex						
Males	3,163,000	16.6	1,262,000	14.7	1,901,000	18.1
Females	2,720,000	14.3	1,065,000	12.7	1,655,000	15.6
Racial/ethnic group						
Asians and pacific Islanders	55,000	9.8	18,000	7.5	37,000	11.5
Blacks	1,023,000	20.4	379,000	16.0	644,000	24.3
Hispanics	923,000	32.2	332,000	25.5	590,000	37.8
Native Americans	82,000	29.2	36,000	27.2	46,000	31.0
Whites	3,426,000	13.0	1,404,000	12.1	2,022,000	13.7
White language minorities	337,000	12.0	144,000	10.9	193,000	13.0
Others	38,000	13.6	14,000	14.0	24,000	13.3
Nativity & language background						
Native born, English only	4,523,000	14.3	1,816,000	12.9	2,707,000	15.4
Native born, non English[1]	817,000	17.8	345,000	15.3	472,000	20.2
Foreign born, English only	53,000	13.9	19,000	13.1	34,000	14.3
Foreign born, non English[1]	490,000	31.9	147,000	25.0	343,000	36.3
Poverty status in 1979[2]						
Above poverty level	4,097,000	13.7	1,559,000	11.7	2,538,000	15.2
Below poverty level	1,498,000	28.1	638,000	26.7	860,000	29.4

[1]People living in households in which one or more people speak a language other than English at home.

[2]Not available for people living in group quarters.

NOTE: Detail may not add to total number because of rounding.

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THE UNDEREDUCATION OF AMERICAN YOUTH

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